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STUDY COURSE NO. 24

POPULAR STUDY COURSE FOR CLUBS

Important Plays of the Seasons 1919-20
and 1920-21 prepared especially
for Club use

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Outlines by Specialists

Compiled by

MRS. A. STARR BEST and ALICE M. HOUSTON

May 1921

Price 25 cents

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POPULAR STUDY COURSE FOR CLUBS—NO. 24

Recent Important Plays of the Seasons 1919-21 for Weekly Meetings of
an Eight Months' Season

If meeting bi-monthly use plays ✓ only.

If meeting monthly use plays * only.

Grouped for theme with study outlines by noted specialists

Compiled by Mrs. A. Starr Best and Miss Alice M. Houston

A. POLITICS AND HISTORY.

✓ 1. **THE LOST LEADER**, by Lennox Robinson (Irish).

Published in excerpt form in Current Opinion, Jan., 1920.

Price, \$0.40.

Presented by Harris with Frank Conroy.

This has been called the most important play in the Irish Theatre since the plays of Synge. An allegory of great leadership re-visiting Ireland.

Discuss historic background, outlining the political history of Ireland.

Are the representatives of the various parties well chosen and vividly drawn?

Is this a thesis play?

Has the dramatist made the story too real and too detailed in Irish History to be of genuine and lasting general interest?

Does the author want to convince you that his story is true or is he content to leave you guessing?

Compare with other mystery plays for method of treatment.

Is there intentional symbolism in the use of the blind zealot as the unwitting destroyer of Ireland's hope?

Study especially the exposition and note the entire treatment of the play as an unusually vivid example of dramatic irony.

References:

Douglas Hyde's Literary History of Ireland.

Parnell and the Land League on Home Rule of 1880 in

Present Irish Questions, by W. O'Connor Morris.

See also Personal Bits in Ireland Since the Union, by Justin Huntley McCarthy, M. P.

"Ireland," by Francis Hackett.

See also Irish Plays and Playwrights, by Cornelius Weygandt.

✓ 2. **THE MOB**, by John Galsworthy (English).

Published by Chas. Scribner & Son.

Price, \$0.60.

Acted by the Neighborhood Playhouse.

Outline by John Vandervoort Sloan.

Topics for Prepared Talks or Papers.

The theme:

(What is it? Could it have been presented more effectively? How? How does the final tableau contribute to it? Is this last scene ironic? Why was the play banned in 1914? Why not now?)

The theme as applied to American conditions:

(Would any changes contribute to a better interpretation from the American viewpoint? What?)

The characters:

(Do they act always as if real? Are there any complexities or contradictions in their natures? Does this make them more, or less, convincing? Do they have a sense of humor? How far are they acted upon from without? How far do they control their own destiny? What events develop each most strikingly?)

Questions for Discussion.

Is the story convincing throughout? What quality contributes most? Can the play be cut at any point without sacrificing an essential part? What is the moment of highest spiritual beauty? Is the climax inevitable? Is it adequately prepared for? How would Shaw have differed in his presentation of such a theme?

★V 3. ABRAHAM LINCOLN, by John Drinkwater (English).

Published by Houghton, Mifflin & Co.

Price, \$1.25.

Acted by Frank McGlynn.

Outline by John Vandervoort Sloan.

Comparison of

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

by John Drinkwater
and

A MAN OF THE PEOPLE

by Thomas Dixon.

Drinkwater's Lincoln.

(He has given us in America a new valuation of Lincoln, the man. He approaches Lincoln with a clear, unbiased perspective. He sees him as a man of vision.)

Dixon's Lincoln.

(Compare the author's portrayal with Drinkwater's. Dixon's is the more conventional history-book "man of the people"; Drinkwater stresses the spiritual side.)

The Episodes of the Plays.

(There is little feminine interest in either play. Both authors have been concerned more with Lincoln's relations with his fellow men. Does this detract from general interest in the play?)

Mary Lincoln.

(Compare the two portrayals of her. Dixon pictures her as a woman whose chief interest was in expensive clothes and other frivolities. Drinkwater makes her the help-mate. His is the more modern conception of Mrs. Lincoln; Dixon's the earlier.)

Questions.

Will Drinkwater's play give us a keener appreciation of Lincoln? Compare it for this value with Dixon's.

Compare these plays for character analysis with Miss Tarbell's **He Knew Lincoln**, and with other accounts of Lincoln's life written by Americans.

Discuss the plays from the point of view of accuracy of detail in comparison with other plays dealing with the period, such as **Shenandoah**, and **Secret Service**.

Does the fact that some of the idiom of Mr. Drinkwater's play is British detract from its power?

Does Mr. Dixon's prologue illuminate the character of Lincoln as portrayed in the play?

Do the lyric passages in the Drinkwater play add or detract from the play as a whole or are they negligible as drama?

Which play gives one a clearer idea of Lincoln's Gettysburg speech?

4. **A MAN OF THE PEOPLE**, by Thomas Dixon (American).

Published by D. Appleton & Co.

Price, \$1.75.

Acted by Thomas Dixon.

Outline by John Vandervoort Sloan.

See outline on Abraham Lincoln above.

5. **MARY STUART**, by John Drinkwater (English).

Published by Houghton Mifflin & Co.

Price, \$1.25.

Acted by Claire Eames and Charles Waldron.

Outline by Walter Prichard Eaton.

What is the outstanding technical difference between this play and the same author's "Abraham Lincoln"? How far does this play follow the Greek unities? Is there anything classical in its spirit?

What is the underlying idea of the play? Is it a study of Mary as an historical person, or as a type of woman, in all ages, who must first find satisfaction in her love-life before she can function properly in her other relations?

Did Mary historically have any opportunity to find a mate worthy of her?

Was her real tragedy, historically, that she could not find such a mate?

Does Drinkwater assume her "guilt" with Riccio, Bothwell, etc., and does he excuse it on the ground that Mary was searching for fulfillment?

How far is Miss Clare Eames, the interpreter of Mary, justified in saying that all women who have not found satisfactory fulfillment in their love life could do, would do, or have thought of doing what Mary did?

Do you feel that in his drama Drinkwater has captured Mary's charm, and the contrast between her culture and the wild, drab court of Scotland?

Technically, compare the opening of the play with the opening of Sheldon's "Romance."

References for historical reading:

"The Mystery of Mary Stuart," by Andrew Lang.

Article on Mary Stuart, by A. C. Swinburne, *Encyclopaedia Brit.*

"The Queen's Quair," by Maurice Hewlett.

"Chastelard" and "Bothwell," by A. C. Swinburne (poetic dramas).

★V 6. **HEARTBREAK HOUSE**, by G. Bernard Shaw (Irish).

Published by Brentano's.

Price, \$1.75.

Presented by the Theatre Guild.

Outline by Theodore B. Hinckley.

What are the leading elements of the English conditions analyzed in the preface? How largely does Mr. Shaw consider them world conditions? How largely do these conditions prevail in America? (These three questions may be used as an outline for a leading talk or paper, or they may be considered in informal discussion.)

Is the play intended to illustrate these conditions? If so, how successful is it? Do the characters represent important, major groups in society, or are they too individual or too abnormal to be types? (These questions may also be used as subjects for a paper.)

Is this a successful acting play? Consider the plot, the audience's interest in one or more characters, the prevailing tone, the underlying idea, if there is one, and the interest of the dialogue, selecting illustrative speeches.

If possible compare the play with Tchekhov's **The Cherry Orchard** for technique, and for successful development of underlying idea.

What constructive thought is offered by the play? Compare this play with earlier plays of the same author.

What is the value of the ship setting and language?

How largely are the incidents or the developments of the plot motivated by the characters or their juxtaposition?

7. **DANTON**, by Romain Rolland (French).

Published by Henry Holt & Co.

Price, \$1.50.

Outline by Barrett H. Clark.

Danton is primarily the study of a character.

It is a moving drama as well, and (for background) a picture of an historical epoch.

It is by no means conventionally constructed play: certain critics have sought to condemn it because it is "not a play at all."

However, until the term play is at last satisfactorily defined, their sort of criticism means nothing. The point to be considered is the effectiveness of a work intended for the stage, and not its conformity or non-conformity to conventional canons.

Rolland's political and sociological bias is well known: everything he writes aims at the exposition or rectification of some social situation or problem, and many of his works (especially the late works) are nothing more than tracts.

Can this be said of **Danton**?

Compare **Danton** with **The Wolves**.

In what way are the plays comparable—technically and as to the underlying idea?

Granting that the final act of **Danton** is the most important dramatically, is there any superfluous material in the preceding acts?

Wherein does **Danton**, a play of individual characters, wills, and destinies, fundamentally differ from the author's "People's Play" the **Fourteenth of July**?

References:

Preface to the **Fourteenth of July and Danton** (Holt).
The Drama, No. 32, p. 575.

If it is not desired to use this play, which was produced in Paris, substitute for it the very clever comedy,

MR. FIM PASSES BY, by A. A. Milne (English).

Published in excerpt form in the Theatre Magazine for September, 1921.

Price, 40 cents.

Acted by the Theatre Guild with Henrietta Crossman.

8. **AMERICANS AMONG US**, by Eugene Brieux (French).

Published in excerpt form in Current Opinion, April, 1920; in *l'Illustration* in French in full January, 1920.

Price, \$0.40 and \$1.00.

Acted by the Provincetown Players.

Outline by Prof. Ralph Farnsworth.

First performed in Paris, January 9, 1920.

This play is an attempt to set forth some of the distinguishing characteristics of the American spirit of initiative in its conflict with French reverence of tradition. The mutual misunderstanding which prevailed during the months following the Armistice of 1918 inspired the author to preach the necessity for forbearance on both sides. He was broad-minded enough to avoid both egotism and flattery, and he produced an absorbing psychological study, despite the fact that dramatic interest is sacrificed to the didactic intention of the play.

Study: The characteristics which Brieux presents as typical of each race. Are they the really fundamental ones. Does the author, with all his sympathy, go far below the surface of American peculiarities? Does he neglect the lovable traits of the French? Does he lean to either side?

Study: The reactions of the characters upon one another. Do the French characters in the play give up their traditions and conservatism too readily under American persuasion? Is Captain Smith's argument for the sacrifice of beauty and sentiment to utility quite convincing? Is his interest in the Charvet property plausible? Does Henri have any reason, aside from his love for Nellie, for so eagerly embracing Americanism? Is the argument of the workmen against the "Taylor system" convincing? In their unusual familiarity with French customs and institutions, are not the two American characters too obviously spokesmen for the author? Would the play be strengthened if the resistance to Henri came from a mother instead of from a sister? Does not Marie Bonain realize satisfactorily the American idea of French character? Is any one of the leading characters absolutely typical in more than one trait? Do we feel unreservedly sympathetic towards any one character?

Study: The aim of the play. Is it likely to promote international understanding and appreciation? What would be the result if less emphasis were placed upon love? Is not its lesson both necessary and important?

Study: The structure of the play. How seriously does lack of action detract from the dramatic interest? Could the didactic purpose be carried out so well if the movement of the play were more exciting? Is the ending of the first act awkward? Is that of the second effective? Is Nellie's conversion at the end of the play well motivated? Are the incidents of the play always plausible?

References:

Current Opinion, April, 1920.

Weekly Review, July 28, 1920; Sept. 28, 1920.

The Living Age, Feb. 28, 1920.

B. THE ETERNAL TRIANGLE.

V 9. **THE JEST**, by Sem Benelli (Italian).

Published in excerpt form in Current Opinion, June, 1919, and in French in the Supplement to l'Illustration, March, 1910.

Price \$0.45 and \$1.00.

Acted by John Barrymore.

Outline by John Vandervoort Sloan.

Topics for Prepared Talks or Papers.

The type of play:

(Is this a play dealing with modern problems in any way? What resemblances in method between it and Shakespearean drama? Does it resemble a particular Shakespearean tragedy in theme? What differences may be observed?)

The theme:

(What is it? Is it one that is typically American? Can an Anglo-Saxon audience fully sympathize with the point of view?)

The characterization:

(Are the characters real? Do they develop or remain static? At any point does the motivation seem weak or artificial?)

Questions for Discussion.

What is the big scene in the play?

To what extent do the historical settings and costumes add to the illusion?

Is the prison scene natural?

Are there comic characters here?

Does the first act lead inevitably to the last?

Select from the dialogue a dozen lines of real poetry.

Comment on the philosophy of the play.

Is the humor rooted in the characters or the situation?

★V 10. **JANE CLEGG**, by St. John Ervine (Irish).

Published by Henry Holt & Co.

Price, \$0.80.

Presented by the Theatre Guild.

Outline by Mrs. A. Starr Best.

A sincere, earnest, treatment of the releasing power of independent means in allowing a woman to determine the working out of her own destiny.

This play is especially significant as proving in its successful production by the Theatre Guild of New York that a sordid play about drab people with an unhappy ending can yet excite sufficient interest for its support.

Topics for Discussion.

1. Would a woman of Jane's background and mental outlook ever have rebelled?
2. Show how the dramatist strengthens the effect of the cowardice and weakness of Clegg by the quiet reticence of Jane.
3. Is it good or bad art to use the children in the first act and never after?
4. Do you still feel their presence through the balance of the play tho upstairs?
5. Does it add anything to your understanding of Jane?
6. Is such a despicable cad as Clegg believable?
7. Is he well drawn and real?
8. Study the Mother as one of the cleverest old lady characterizations in dramatic literature.
9. Note especially how well the dramatist prepares for his Exciting Force, Climax and Catastrophy.
10. Is Clegg's lying natural and well managed?
11. Is his enmeshing of himself with each lie made to seem inevitable?
12. Note how long it takes Jane to throw off the long established habit of enduring her selfish husband.

Note how the dramatist makes Jane stand by Clegg thru his cowardice and forgery and even his unfaithfulness until she sees that he has jeopardized her boy's chance of a future.

Note how cleverly the dramatist shows the Mother's baleful influence on Clegg.

Note that altho the other woman never appears she is so vividly drawn that she seems like a character in the play.

★V 11. **PASSION FLOWER**, by Jacinto Benavente Y. Martinez (Spanish).

Published by Chas. Scribner Sons (in plays tr. by J. G. Underhill, 1917).

Price, \$1.50.

Acted by Nance O'Neil.

Outline by John Vandervoort Sloan.

Paper: The Spanish School of Drama.

(Discuss the plays of the Quinteros, Sierra, and others of the modern Spanish school.)

Talk: Benavente and Echegaray.

(The former is of the younger group of dramatists in Spain; Echegaray represents an older order. Compare *El Gran Galeoto* and *The Passion Flower*.)

Paper: Benavente and Moliere.

(Benavente probably more than any other of the Spanish dramatists has the Gallic sense of humor. Moliere might have written *No Smoking*, or *His Widow's Husband* better than Benavente wrote them, but with no more feeling for comedy.)

Talk: The Serious Benavente.

(Benavente shows in *The Passion Flower* and in *Saturday Night* the opposite swing of the pendulum as compared with his comedies.)

Questions.

Is the character of the mother in **The Passion Flower** consistently drawn. Is it plausible that she should have been unaware of her husband's infatuation for his step-daughter?

Does Benavente excel in comedy or in tragedy?

Discuss Benavente as to his place among modern dramatists.

Compare Raimunda and Imperia. In both these plays, **The Passion Flower** and **Saturday Night**, the author has made his heroines women with grown daughters. Is the character of the daughter, Acacia, consistently drawn?

Is it possible for a woman to hate a man and then suddenly discover that it is love and not hate?

12. **THE TREASURE**, by David Pinski (Russian).

Published by Huebsch.

Price, \$1.00.

Presented by the Theatre Guild.

Outline by Mrs. A. Starr Best.

This play is one of the best examples of an interesting new school of dramatic literature dealing exclusively with Jewish problems and largely written in Yiddish.

Note especially how the author establishes atmosphere, especially the wonderful bits of local color.

In spite of the absolutely Yiddish characteristics of the play, has it after all a wider application, carrying a note of ethnic value as well.

What is the meaning of Tillie's impulses?

Does the continually reiterated reference to the Fast day add anything in establishing the weakness of the characters?

Notice how the author sustains our suspense throughout the play even tho we know inevitably that the finding of the dog's grave will discover no further treasure.

Does the use of the idiot boy as the one who holds their fate in his hand in the knowledge of the secret grave add to the subtlety.

Is the author grinning at humanity? or pitying it?

How does the epilogue answer this? Note the complete circle of the play—at the end the original finders and revellers in the treasure are eager only to get back to their first position.

Compare the last act with other grave yard scenes as Maeterlinck's *Blue Bird*, etc.

Does it seem real? Is there any special value in the unassigned speeches in this act?

Where do you find any other use of this method in dramatic literature?

Discuss the technique, noting especially the adroit exposition and the sense of inevitability of the action.

Is the play pyramidal or catastrophic?

Notice that the exciting force—Tillie's desire to dream dreams—is established in the first few pages.

Study especially Dr. Lewisohn's introduction to the translation.

13. **THE WOMAN OF BRONZE**, by Henry Kistemaecker and Eugene

Delard, adapted by Paul Kester.

Published in French only.

Acted by Margaret Anglin.

Outline by John Vandevort Sloan.

Paper: The Structure of the Play.

(The play is of foreign—French—origin. (La Rivale.) In many ways it retains in its translation the foreign form, although Mr. Kester in his adaptation has changed the locale to America and made the "curtains" more conformative to the Anglo-American drama.)

Talk: The Theme of the Play.

(Discuss the question of the right of the married artist to seek inspiration anywhere he can find it. Do you think the Continental standard in this respect differs from our own?)

Paper: Vivian Hunt.

(Discuss the character of the wife; her attitude toward her husband, the artist, and what he considers his greatest achievement; her attitude toward her cousin.)

Talk: The Character of Leonard Hunt.

(Compare him with his and Vivian's friend, Patrick Burke. They represent in Mr. Kester's adaptation, at least, opposite points of view. Leonard gives free rein to his infatuation for his wife's cousin; Patrick worships his friend's wife but remembers he is a friend.)

Questions.

- Do you consider Vivian responsible in any way for her husband's defection? If so, how?

Is Vivian's action in the last act consistent with real life?

Compare the play with D'Annunzio's *La Gioconda*.

Do you consider the play in its adapted form an addition to America drama? Why or why not?

What motivates Leonard's attitude in the last act, love for Vivian; contrition; or a desire to go on with his statue?

(If it is impossible to use this French play, substitute:)

LIGHTIN', by Frank Bacon and Winchell Smith (American).

Published in excerpt form in *Current Opinion*, October, 1918.

Price, \$0.50.

Acted by Frank Bacon.

Compare with other important character plays—as those of Jefferson and Chevalier.

Does the play suffer for being devised chiefly to exploit a character part, or is the story sufficiently related and interesting?

Discuss as a typical American play. Would it have general interest elsewhere?

Does it depend entirely upon the chief actor? or is the character sufficiently striking to be enduring?

Is this a novel and original idea? Is it cleverly worked out?

Compare the courtroom scene with other famous scenes, such as in *Madam X*, *On Trial*, *The Legend of Leonora*, and *Common Clay*. In what ways is this better? in what ways inferior? Note how the dramatist arranges for Bill, the "lead" to have the main part even in the trial and conduct the case.

C. A SOCIAL ISSUE.

★v 14. **THE SKIN GAME**, by John Galsworthy (English).

Published by Chas. Scribner & Sons.

Price, \$1.00.

Outline by Mrs. A. Starr Best.

A thoughtful dramatic and uncommonly interesting play showing the conflict between a staid, well bred family of centuries, standing and the vulgar aggressive newly rich newcomers who threaten to demolish the countryside.

The theme of the play deals with the axiom that "he who touches pitch becomes defiled."

This is the first substantial popular success of Galsworthy's and is written with unusually good technique.

Discussion for Structure.

Notice the quality of the technique and its close resemblance to Pinero's best methods.

Show how this play is particularly characteristic of this author in not taking sides and compare with *Strife* and *Silver Box* for this quality.

Discuss the devices used to keep your interest and your sympathy evenly between Hillcrests and Hornblowers, and show how the dramatist does this.

How does he offset the natural tendency to sympathize with the Hillcrests preponderantly.

Is the play strengthened for resisting a "Happy ending?"

Why is the third scene weak?

Discuss for Ethics.

Why did the Hillcrests become contaminated when their original purpose was to protect legitimately their helpless dependents?

What is the "pitch that besmirches them"?

How does the dramatist get your sympathy for the unlovely Hornblowers?

How far must culture and aristocracy go to allow aggressive boundaries a fair chance?

Is it ever right to use dishonorable means even to accomplish an honorable end?

It is claimed that this is a war play symbolic of the great conflict.

Is this theory tenable?

Show how the symbolism might be worked out with England, representing the aristocracy of the nations, coming to the defense of Belgium, the supplanted helpless family holding a pledge for immunity, against an aggressive relentless, upstart Germany, and in the conflict becoming besmirched with the enemy's own methods.

Compare with Heartbreak House for war symbolism.

v 15. MIXED MARRIAGE, by St. John Ervine (Irish).

Published by Macmillan. (In four Irish Plays.)

Price, \$1.00.

Presented by the Theatre Guild.

Outline by John Vandervoort Sloan.

Topics for Prepared Talks or Papers.

The theme:

(What is it? How is it developed? Is it necessarily tragic? Is it sentimentally treated?)

The characters:

(Who is the outstanding figure of the play? What character has the most philosophy, the greatest sense of humor, and the finest tact? Are there any unnecessary characters? Cf. the characterization of Mrs. Rainey with Desdemona, Imogen, Cordelia, Juliet and Portia. What differences?

The comic genius of Ervine:

(Cf. with Shaw or Wilde. Is this comic element here inherent in character, situation, or dialogue?)

Questions for Discussion.

What is the underlying philosophy of the play?

Is there poetic imagination here?

Is the last act as convincing as the others? Why (not)?

Is this a great play?

What is its chief merit?

Are mixed marriages necessarily unhappy? Why (not)?

16. THE LETTER OF THE LAW (THE RED ROBE), by Eugene Brieux (French).

Published by Brentano's.

Price, \$1.50.

Acted by Lionel Barrymore.

Outline by John Vandervoort Sloan.

Brieux the Dramatist:

(Compare Brieux and Bernstein as to their qualities as dramatists. Brieux writes with a purpose always. He is more concerned with his thesis than with the form of his play. Bernstein writes obviously for the theatre. Which is more successful as a matter of good drama? Bernstein's plays have been much more successful in production than Brieux's. Is this due to their themes or to their construction?)

Brieux the Reformer:

(All of Brieux's plays have been concerned with, from his point of view, some social ailment. Of his best known ones, **The Three Daughters of M. Dupont**, played here some years ago by the late Laurence Irving, deals with certain phases of the marriage question; **Maternity** is a plea for the protection of motherhood; **Damaged Goods** has to do with sex education; **The Red Robe** with the abuse of legal power. Discuss the conclusions he arrives at in these plays and what, if any, their value is as documents of reform.)

Brieux the Realist:

(Are his characters real men and women? Are their reactions normal? Does he not neglect character study in his absorption in his theme? Would his characters appear more real if he wrote of them in story rather than in play form?)

Brieux the Humanitarian:

(Discuss Brieux's plays from the humanitarian point of view. Do you feel that he is sincerely interested in men and women as much as in human institutions, or does he "like to hear himself talk?" Is he anarchistic or socialistic?)

Questions.

Discuss the character of Yanetta.

What is Brieux's place among modern French dramatists?

Is **The Red Robe** technically good drama?

Does Brieux work out his problem logically and to a satisfactory conclusion?

Compare it as to structure with **The Three Daughters of M. Dupont** and **Damaged Goods**. Which is the best play and why?

After the legal abuses pictured in **The Red Robe** shall have been remedied, has the play sufficient merit as good drama to make it live?

Do you consider the drama an effective medium for remedying social evils?

17. THE POWER OF DARKNESS, by Tolstoi (Russian).

Published by Boni & Liveright.

Price \$.85.

Acted by The Theater Guild.

Outline by Jack Randall Crawford.

Topics for Prepared Talks or Papers.

The picture of Russian life which this life reveals, the peasant, his master and the environment.

(Choose the material from the play itself.)

Tolstoi as an apostle of Christian brotherhood:

(A simple explanation of his point of view.)

The preacher as artist:

(A discussion of whether the preacher should essay art or the artist preaching.)

Questions.

What is the "Power of Darkness?"

Is there any parallel for this play in American life?

What are the characteristics that seem to you most peculiarly Russian?

The character of the Russian peasant?

Published in "Plays," translated by Louise and Aylmer Maude
Constable and Co.

✓ 18. **EMPEROR JONES**, by Eugene O'Neill (American).

Published by Theatre Arts Magazine, Jan., 1921, or Boni &
Liveright.

Price \$.75 for magazine or \$2.00 for Book.

Acted by Charles Gilpin.

Outline by Walter Prichard Eaton.

What is the theme of this play?

Do you feel that the author was making a racial study?—or
seeking to dramatize the emotion of fear?—or both?

Do you, or not, feel that the author has escaped the monot-
ony that lurks in a play which is so nearly a monologue? If he
has, what are some of the means employed to attain variety?

Is the language of the play satisfactory? *i. e.* is it in keeping
with the character and, at the same time, does it rise to the
poetic or emotional demands of the drama? If not, in what
direction does it fail?

Compare this play with Stephen Crane's story, "The Badge of
Courage." In what respects does each gain by its chosen medium?

What other work has Eugene O'Neill done for the theatre?
What are its general characteristics? How would you class him
among American dramatists?

Technically:—What is the value of the tom-tom beat heard
throughout the play?

19. **THE FAITHFUL**, by John Masefield (English).

Published by Macmillan Co.

Price \$1.25.

Acted by The Theater Guild.

Outline by Jack Randall Crawford.

Topics for Prepared Talks or Papers.

The exotic theme and its dramatic purpose:

(An analysis of the question "do we believe in a story set
in a remote time?")

"The Faithful" as an example of tragedy:

("Character is fate"—apply this to the tragedy in question.)

Beauty as an element of tragedy:

(A discussion of its influence upon the emotional effect of
tragedy.)

Questions.

Is the situation one possible in contemporary American life?
Why is the scene laid in Japan?

Does the structure conform to that of classic or Elizabethan
tragedy?

How is the illusion of the play obtained?

Published by Wm. Heineman, New York.

D. A QUESTION OF PRINCIPLE or a Character Issue.

★✓ 20. **JOHN FERGUSON**, by St. John Ervine (Irish).

Published by Macmillan Co.

Price \$1.50.

Presented by The Theater Guild.

Outline by Jack Randall Crawford.

Topics for Prepared Talks or Papers.

Tragic Irony:

(Does irony add to the pity and terror of tragedy, or does
its bitterness interfere with the illusion of truth?)

Is John Ferguson's theory of life a true one?

(Discuss the practical aspects of the doctrine of non-resistance. Find the biblical passages that support this theory.)

Questions.

What is the accident of circumstance that brings about the tragedy?

What is the function in the play of the half-witted Jimmie Caesar?

Compare the structure of this play with that of any other tragedy with which you are familiar. What resemblance and differences do you note?

Why is it a "good play"—that is to say, why did audiences flock to see it?

21. MARYROSE, by J. M. Barrie (English).

Published in excerpt form in *Current Opinion* (July, 1920).

Price \$.40.

Acted by Ruth Chatterton.

Outline by Jack Randall Crawford.

Topics for Prepared Talks or Papers.

Modern mysticism in contemporary drama:

(What influence are present day spiritual theories and psycho-analysis having upon playwrights?)

The spiritual meaning of the play:

(An analysis of the evidence in support of your theory.)

Why the public likes "Mary Rose":

(An analysis of Barrie's powers over his audiences.)

Questions.

In what respects does the structure for this play differ from the technique of the so-called "well made" play?

Does this play gain or lose by using an episode telling of the story?

What is Barrie's theory of the after life?

What makes the play dramatic?

Does it suffer from too much theory?

★v 22. BEYOND THE HORIZON, by Eugene O'Neill (American).

Published by Boni & Liveright.

Price \$1.50.

Acted by Richard Bennett.

Outline by Jack Randall Crawford.

Topics for Prepared Talks or Papers.

Mr. O'Neill and the American farm:

(A comparison of Mr. O'Neill's portrayal with a typical known case.)

Pessimism in contemporary drama:

(Why is this more apt to be characteristic of Continental than of American drama?)

Is Mr. O'Neill an exception in his point of view?

Mr. O'Neill's portrayal of American types:

(An analysis of his character from the point of determining the fidelity of the portrayal.)

Questions.

What lies "Beyond the Horizon?"

Is a rainbow more or less beautiful because its end has no pot of gold?

What is the dramatic effectiveness of simplicity?

Are the characters real or exaggerations?

Why, in your opinion, have the audiences been divided in their opinions in the reception of this play?

✓ 23. **THE FAMOUS MRS. FAIR**, by James Forbes (American).

Published by Geo. H. Doran.

Price \$2.00.

Acted by Blanche Bates and Henry Miller.

Outline by Alice C. D. Riley.

The Famous Mrs. Fair by James Forbes, (author of *The Chorus Lady*) is described as a serio-comedy which exploits in a modern way the old theme of a double standard. Although, to quote *Current Opinion*,—"a wife's craving for a career cannot in any circumstances be classed as a sin—nor a husband have the right to be unfaithful simply because his wife embraced an opportunity to go to California," yet Mr. Forbes actually does make Fair say: "You don't think my affair with Mrs. Brice was a greater sin against our love than your craving for a career," and with the big bulk of his audience "got away with it" every time. It is interesting to note the methods by which the playwright manages to so manipulate the sympathies of his audience against all common-sense and clear thinking. This is especially noteworthy as even in Act I he shows Fair to be a small-minded man of supremely selfish motivation,—"I'm grieved enough by the crowd as it is;" and in the exposition he is careful to show us that Mrs. Fair has not only done big things in France but has been "decorated for bravery," and that her motive in undertaking the tour originally was to get money "for reconstruction work." In spite of all this, there can be no question but that the usual preponderance of sympathy was with Fair and against her. Why was this?

Is this bias due to the conventional standards of society, or is it the art of the playwright?

If you think the playwright has a hand in it, how do you think he has done it? Which side of the case is principally exploited in the play? How would you write it to exploit the other side?

Why is it a comedy? Do the characters motivate the plot? Does it take the circular form, swinging back to first position at the end, but with every one's eyes open to his own folly? Where does the play center? As a matter of real life, do you think the fact of a mother's trip to California weighed against an unfaithful father would be a more disastrous factor in a daughter's life?

What grade of man do you take Fair to be? Would his position be the position of the average American man? Would the average American woman feel the same resentment over acclaim given to a husband who had acquitted himself honorably in the war? Is this difference due to real or conventional causes?

How early in the play is the divorce note sounded? In what key? Is this early establishment of the key of comedy cleverly handled?

Note the dramatic value of the change in clothes, language and manner which Sylvia displays early in Act III. How much information does this instantly give you? Is her acceptance of a man like Gillette natural? Is she convincing? Is all your sympathy with Sylvia? Do you sympathize with Fair? With Mrs. Fair? Do you think the Fairs may expect a happy future?

Has this play an especial bearing on American life?

Is it a good study of American types? What are the values you get from it? Do you rank it highly as a comedy?

★✓ 24. **DEAR BRUTUS**, by J. M. Barrie (English).

Published by Chas. Scribner & Sons, N. Y. Price, \$1.00.

Excerpts *Current Opinion* (Feb., 1919). Price, \$.45.

Outline by Jack Randall Crawford.

Acted by William Gillette.

Topics for Prepared Papers or Talks.

On telling the truth whimsically:

(Consideration of Lob's plan and its result. What inferences do you draw?)

The meaning of the title in reference to the play:

(See the passage in Shakespeare's "Julius Caesar" whence the title is derived.)

Events that happen on mid-summer's day at night:

(The charm of the play perhaps depends in part upon our beliefs still surviving from our pagan ancestors.)

Questions.

What do you understand the "dream child" to mean?

Does the ending contradict the theme of the play?

What is Mr. Lob's theory of a house party?

Is Sir James Barrie right about a second chance in life?

25. **DEBURAU**, by Sacha Guitry (French).

Adapted and translated by Granville Barker (English).

Published by Putnam.

Price \$2.00.

Acting by Lionel Atwill.

Outline by Jack Randall Crawford.

Topics for Prepared Talks or Papers.

The problem of translating—a comparison of the original text with Mr. Granville Barker's English version.

(Illustrate by using parallel passages.)

The character play:

(A discussion of the play focussed upon a single character.)

A comparison of Deburau's lines on the art of acting with Hamlet's advice to the players.

(Points of agreements and differences.)

Questions.

How does the setting contribute to the charm of the play?

The pathos of Deburau.

Why do we sentimentalize our anecdotes of the stage?

"The King is dead—long live the King." How does Deburau illustrate this theme?

v 26. **MISS LULU BETT**, by Zona Gale (American).

Published in Excerpts Current Opinion, April, 1921, \$.35.

Acted by Carrol McComas.

Outline by Walter Prichard Eaton.

Which do you consider the truer and more effective work of art, the play or the book? Why?

Are the people of the play true small town types, or are they exceptional and exaggerated?

Do you find the play appealing as a social picture, perhaps a satire, or as an emotional study of a single woman—Lulu? Or both?

How far do you consider that the omitted scene between Lulu and her husband in the South the scene of his confession to her and her departure for home—was really an "obligatory scene" (see William Archer's "Principles of Playmaking")? Would the play be stronger if this scene had not been omitted? Do you feel that you want to go off with Lulu on her honeymoon, and do you have an unsatisfied feeling at being compelled to wait for her return? If so, does that indicate a dramatic weakness in the play?

Would the play be better, more truthful and invigorating, if it did not have the traditional "happy ending," so called, but if, instead, Lulu merely achieved the courage and confidence to go out into the world, her own mistress?

Technically:—What is the value of the duplicated openings of Acts II and III? Does the play rely on knowledge of the book to bridge certain gaps, or does it stand on its own feet?

27. **ENTÉE MADAME**, by Gilda Varesi (Italian Actress) and Dolly Byrne.

Published by Putnam.

Price \$1.75.

Acted by Gilda Varesi.

Outline by Walter Prichard Eaton.

Is this a vehicle play for the actress? If so, how far are the other characters subordinated? Are they made important enough to keep the drama well balanced?

How far does the play seem artificial, by creating situations to show off the actress, or how far do those situations seem psychologically truthful and naturally developed?

What situations in the play can you trace back to other plays in the past? (Compare "The Concert," "The Great Lover," and "Romance," for example.)

Technically:—Study the preparation for the entrance of Madame. Is her character sufficiently established before she appears? Are you "worked up" to the proper pitch of curiosity? On the other hand, does what precede her entrance seem obviously a preparation for her? How far does the picturesqueness of her entrance, her train of retainers, etc., conspire to the interest of the play? Study the appeal made to the eye even in a play of this nature.

What is the value in the play of the character of the son? Of the banquet scene?

- ✓ 28. **LILIOM**, by Franz Molnar.

Published by Boni & Liveright.

Price \$1.75.

Acted by Joseph Schildkraut.

Outline by Walter P. Eaton.

How does this play differ from the ordinary drama in construction?

Are the episodes sufficiently connected to give you a sense of dramatic progression, and to keep your curiosity and interest awake?

What are the advantages of the episodic method?

Note the realistic style in which the play is written. Does this make the fantastic element more, or less, appealing to you?

Is Liliom himself a character study, or is he a quaint conceit of the author, intended to carry some symbolical idea, like Peer Gynt? Or is it possible that he is both, the latter resulting naturally from the author's affection for his creation?

What, to you, is the message of the play?

Did Liliom have to go back to hell?

Study particularly the way in which the humor, the irony, the cruelty, and the tenderness and beauty in this play are fused together. Is there any "comic relief," in the usual sense? Isn't this constant blending of masculine harshness, of pert humor, and feminine tenderness and wistful devotion a great element in the play's charm?

Do you find such blending in second-rate or "machine-made" drama?

How far are the picturesque setting and characters of the play an element in its stage success—i.e., the appeal to the eye and the appeal of novelty?

29. DIFF'RENT, by Eugene O'Neill (American).

Published by Boni and Liveright (in volume with **Emperor Jones**).

Price \$2.00.

Acted by Edward Ellis.

Outline by Mrs. A. Starr Best.

A study in the mental effect of disappointed ideals and inhibited emotions, leading to a reversion to a complete antithesis through mental derangement.

Study the outlining of the characters as typical sea-folk. Are they convincing and natural?

Notice the importance of the stage sets and their place in supplying the exposition, including their final importance in conveying the mental attitude of Emma at the close. On this account would the play be more convincing in action than in reading? Compare with "Fortune Hunter," "Beyond Horizon" and "Milestones" for this point.

Is the change between acts I and II too sudden to carry you with it? Does the unanticipated violence of the change cause too great a revolt to allow for the necessary sympathetic analysis to make it convincing?

Does Caleb's end seem consistent with his character?

Would Emma, the passionless idealist of the first act, ever have reverted, even under mental derangement, to the pitiful antithesis of the second act? Does the dramatist go too far in attempting to produce his ironic antithesis?

Is the play weakened in unity by the loss of the many characters of the first act, or is this compensated by the frequent reference to them?

Discuss the unusual effect of a two-act play. Is it explained by the great lapse of time? What other two-act plays can you think of to compare for structure? By a study of these can you note any special technique for the two-act play?

Is Emma's unlikeness to her environment sufficiently explained by the frequent references to her reading?

Does the continued reiteration of the title, irritate or convince you?

E. MELODRAMA.

30. THE GREEN GODDESS, by Wm. Archer (English).

Published by Knopf. Price, \$2.00.

Acted by George Arliss.

Outline by Jack Randall Crawford.

Topics for Prepared Talks or Papers.

A Defense of Melodrama:

(See Wm. Archer's "Playmaking"—A Manual for Craftsmen.)

The technique of Melodrama:

(The factors,—plot, character and situation in relation to problem of melodrama.)

The Stock Situations of Melodrama:

(Self sacrifice, conflict between love and duty, physical peril, the eleventh hour rescue, etc.)

Characterization in Melodrama:

(The hero—the heroine—the villain—the adventuress—the comic relief, the importance of the minor characters.)

Questions.

How does Mr. Archer reveal his intimate knowledge of the theatre?

Is the solution of the situation plausible?

How is suspense induced and maintained? How is surprise used?

How does the setting contribute to the interest of the story?
Is the rajah a villain with a difference?
What is the secret for the popular appeal of "The Green Goddess"?

F. PLEASANT COMEDY.

31. **ADAM AND EVA**, by George Middleton and Guy Bolton (American).

Published in excerpt form in Current Opinion for June, 1920.
Price \$.40.

Acted by Otto Kruger.

Outline by John V. Sloan.

Paper: A picture of American Life.

(This play was hailed by New York critics as a great American comedy because it was so native in character, ideas and detail. What characters and what ideas are not found in foreign life?)

Talk: Comedy and Farce.

(What features of the play do not spring from character relations? What features are heightened so that they have a farce quality? Is a combination of the two forms effective? Compare with Call the Doctor.

Paper: American Last Acts.

(Is the value of the play as a picture of life injured by the rapidity with which difficulties are smoothed away? Is this act as forceful as the others? Compare with last acts of other American and foreign plays.)

Talk: The Themes in American Farce-Comedy.

(The use of serious themes in these plays is increasing. Compare with **Bunker Bean** for value of theme, care in development of it, and effectiveness of treatment.)

Questions.

What are the wholly artificial or untrue elements of the play?

Compare the farming in this play with the preserve-making in **Turn to the Right**.

Characterize Mrs. King. Is she a familiar type?

Discuss American well-to-do youth as portrayed in the play.

What is the value of the character of Lord Gordon?

Compare this play as American drama with **Mama's Affair** and **Clarence**.

32. **THE FIRST YEAR**, by Frank Craven (American actor).

Published in excerpt form in Current Opinion for March, 1921.
Price \$.35.

Acted by Frank Craven.

Outline by Walter P. Eaton.

Is this a vehicle play? If so, how far are the subordinate parts mere feeders, or are they truthfully individualized?

On what is the humor based?—i. e., on situation, dialogue, character development, observation of life? (Remember that when speeches which have amused you in the theatre, either fade from your memory later, or, if quoted, do not seem amusing, it is a pretty sure sign that the humor resides in the situations and interplay of character, not in the mere dialogue.)

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Is the observation in this play—such as the domestic details preceeding the dinner party—truthful? Does it seem to you satirical? Has it any value beyond the moment?

Compare the picture of small town life here with that in "Miss Lulu Bett." Which seems the more nearly typical and American? Does Craven laugh at or with his characters? Which do you consider the more effective method?

Technically:—Compare with "Miss Lulu Bett"—which play moves more rapidly and directly, with the greater suspense? Try to trace the technical development back of "The First Year" from 19th century American farce. Is it technically one with "Seven Keys to Baldpate," "Turn to the Right," etc., or is it European in origin?

Realizing the difficulty of securing the volumes necessary for such an extended study course, the Drama League has assembled several loan libraries containing the volumes necessary for this course which will be rented to circles and groups in small towns for \$15.00 plus express charges.

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